



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening statement: “Alright, ready to get ready for the Chargers. Little bit of a short week with the Monday night and the travel back. We adjusted today a little bit, getting ourselves ready to go. Obviously, Philip Rivers has been doing it at a high level for a long time. Good football player. A lot of explosive passes down the field. Keenan Allen had a tremendous season. [Melvin] Gordon, a very good back. Their rush is as good as any in the league. Good football team and should be a good game. Questions?”

Q: Was Michael Crabtree hurt that his snaps were down?

Coach Del Rio: “No, I think he was bothered a little bit at the end of the game with a hamstring. Missed opportunity. I think he had one that would have been close to a touchdown, if not a touchdown. That’s what it was.”

Q: How do you fix the little details?

Coach Del Rio: “That’s the difference between winning and losing. The execution of basic plays. You get a design to get a guy free. The guy runs the right route. The quarterback throws the ball on time. It all works together. The line obviously has to give him time to get that done. All those things happen, and then you have a successful play. Any one of those things can throw it off. We basically have taken turns with how that is or what that is that’s caused that. The bottom line is execution. That’s why when you ask me, there’s a lot of occasion to what I feel is like trying to defend from blaming. You don’t want to blame. It’s not really about blaming. It’s about teaching and coaching. To recognize that’s that what it is. The guy ran a wrong route at a bad time. A guy broke down in protection at a bad time. Quarterback maybe didn’t see a guy come open that he could have. He was doing his normal progression that he’s supposed to do. Things like that, a little bit here and a little bit there adds up to inefficient play and performance.”

Q: What have you made of what Todd Downing has done in his first year as offensive coordinator?

Coach Del Rio: “Well, obviously, a lot of things have gone on in a negative direction. But I do know the guy is super bright. He’s going to be a really good coach in this league. I believe in him. Those are not things that people want to hear right now because the reality is we’ve underperformed offensively this year. So naturally there’s going to be those kinds of questions. I think we all understand that. I understand it. He understands it. But it doesn’t change my belief. It’s what I know. There have been some, a tough set of circumstances and things have not gone real smooth. Not what we’re looking for. But this is really about the Chargers. I’d really rather keep it on... We can get into the season-ending talk when it’s appropriate next week. I’d like to keep this about going out and finding a way to beat the Chargers.”

Q: Will David Amerson practice today?

Coach Del Rio: “Today is going to be a little bit of a walk-through. Today is not the important day, but tomorrow and Friday would be. He’s been close. Gotten to where we thought he could and didn’t quite make it. Hopefully he’ll be back.”

Q: What did you see out of Reggie Nelson on Monday? Why was there a difference?

Coach Del Rio: “I don’t know, he had the Christmas spirit. He was feeling good. He was active. He had the one tip ball that he picked. He had his hands on a couple of others. He came up and showed up in the run defense. I thought he tackled aggressively in the game. I thought it was one of his better performances this year. We’ve been talking to him. The guy has now 36 interceptions. It was like, ‘Come on, man. We have to get you 36 interceptions.’ Happy for him to get that done. He’s a proud guy. He’s worked hard. He cares a great deal. I was happy to see him play so well.”

Q: What’s the biggest difference you’ve seen with interceptions?

Coach Del Rio: “Catching the ball. Playing a little more aggressively. A little more confidence I think. The guys feel good about the way they’re preparing and competing on game days.”



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Q: You had a lot of success running the ball last week. How much was because of the conditions or an attitude?

Coach Del Rio: "I think there was an attitude set early in the week that we wanted to be physical. There were two things that I talked about with the team that we were going to run and we were going to be physical and we needed to start fast in that building because they really jump on people there. Looking back those were two of the things that we said we had to do. The line did a nice job. They've been physical all year and we played more of what we call 'Big Boy Ball' on Monday night."

Q: Rodney Hudson played on Monday night. Is it another one of those things that shouldn't be overlooked?

Coach Del Rio: "Without a doubt. What he's given up for the team right here in the last couple of weeks is extraordinary. There's not a lot of people that are willing to do that. He's been there for his team and his teammates. He's performing well. It's not like a guy that's making it to the game and not performing and actually hurting the team. He's performing well. It's admirable for him to tough it out and deal with the pain and make it to the game and play as well as he has."

Q: How close do you feel like you were from being how good you wanted to be this year?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I mean that's a good question. I think the bottom line is I look at that game, I look at any game that we played this year, I didn't feel like it was overwhelming an impossible task for us. We go into that game, that team is 13-2. Really, I feel like we let one get away. It's kind of been that way a little bit for us this year. It's been a tough year, but it's not a matter of anything of guys not wanting it, not working hard, not trying. Any of those kinds of things it's just crazy to even think that way. It's just basic execution is the difference between being happy and not. In some key moments, we've had some unfortunate situations happen. Ball on the ground, ball intercepted, missed field goal, things like that are not what you need to do if you want to win those games. We know that because we had an example last year of us going and closing games like that and winning those things. Comes down to making plays and I think the biggest difference, really in 2017 and 2016, the biggest number one thing is the turnover differential. It showed itself again on Monday when we're, I think, minus three in the game. It's hard to win an NFL game being minus three."

Q: You talked a few weeks ago about the team playing with a sense of urgency. Do you feel like they did and how does it carry over to the final game that doesn't mean anything?

Coach Del Rio: "It means a lot to us. It's our last opportunity to come together this group of men. Last time we'll be together. So, it's a great opportunity for us to finish the right way, come together and play well. I don't think there's any doubt that the last couple of games have been what you look for in terms of effort and energy put out. The execution gets cleaned up a little bit, it goes really well. That's what we do as a coaching staff, the number one thing for us to continue to do is build belief and to continue to work hard. That's what we're doing."

Q: With the drop off in turnover differential, there's been a drop off in field position.

Coach Del Rio: "Not on Monday."

Q: Not on Monday. There were a lot of opportunities in that regard and no points.

Coach Del Rio: "I think we repeatedly gave ourselves an opportunity, being right there knocking on the door. Need to take advantage of those opportunities and you go home happy."

Q: When the opposition is so clearly avoiding Cordarrelle Patterson, is there anything you can do pre-snap to get the ball in his hands?

Coach Del Rio: "Are you looking for a spot on the staff? I'll let you take that up with [special teams coordinator] coach [Brad] Seely next time you talk to him."



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Raiders QB Derek Carr

Q: What is your mindset going into the last game?

Carr: "It's weird, right? Yeah, you know, it's our last game of the season. We just want to go out there, I just want to go out there and compete. I love playing this game. My mindset is to prepare like I always do and just go lay it all out there like I always try to. I'm pumped up to play against a division rival. They have a lot that they're playing for and we want to go in there and finish the season with a win. That's the most important. We just want to go in there and get a win against a really good football team. But I just want to go out, compete. That's what I love doing. I love going out there and playing against some of the best players and going out there with your teammates and playing as hard as you can."

Q: Do you use the chance to be a spoiler as motivation or is it just all about doing what you want to do?

Carr: "It's more so you just want to go and win. If you can do that along the way, then cool. But, if you start thinking like that, your motivations are wrong, you're thinking about the wrong things. We have a long way to go to get to where we want to be. There's a process that we have to go through and there's a lot of work that needs to be done. So, my focus now is just continuing to grow and gaining all the information that we can from this year, recapping it at the end, but most importantly just focused on getting this win and then moving forward."

Q: Do you think expectations for this team were unrealistic going into this year?

Carr: "I don't think so, no. I don't think so, because when we show flashes of what we can be, then everyone is like, 'Oh, there it is.' But then we weren't consistent enough. We're not consistent enough all year, especially in the details of our assignments. That's one area that has to and will be cleaned up – from thinking about little things that come to mind right now. But I don't think any expectation is ever too far out there for any team in the NFL. You see a team that's in first place and all those things that we just played on Monday night and we're right there, as ugly as it was, to try and get a win. So, any time the expectations, too high or too low, I don't really think that there really is a difference."

Q: Is this season harder to handle than the 0-10 start in your rookie year?

Carr: "I think for some, absolutely. For me, going 0-10 and how I feel right now is about the same. We're not in the playoffs, so sitting there having to know that other people are playing and you're not, that sucks. It does. Whether you're 0-10 or you're 6-9 right now and not making the playoffs, they both hurt because your end goal is to hopefully win your division, get a chance in the playoffs and win a Super Bowl. That will never change. My mindset will never change on that."

Q: How does watching the playoffs this year, individually, compare to you watching them last year?

Carr: "You know, it sucks. It's two different kind of sucks too. Last year I broke my ankle, couldn't do anything about it. This year we didn't win enough games. It's a different feeling, but it's still the same kind of feeling. It's an opportunity that we don't get. If it fuels the right people, it will propel us going forward."

Q: What will your process be come Monday?

Carr: "I definitely have to let my body rest for certain things and all of that. Whatever I can do and whatever my trainers allow me to do, get back into that way. You want to take a break mentally, just from that grind. I always try to give myself 14 days. I always set that out there, I never make it and I won't this time either. I do have to give myself a break though, because I didn't get one last year. As soon as the season was over I was back into it. I think maybe I had like seven days in between where I got cleared and coming back into here. I'm definitely going to take a mental break, but physically getting ready to be better. I'll definitely come in better shape, eating better, whatever I have to do – I'll definitely come in better come April."



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Q: Do you already have some ideas on some of the things you can do to get better?

Carr: "I have notes I've written down over the course of time that I keep with me. I don't have a plan right now. I'm so focused on trying to win this game, I have not sat there and written it out. I wish I had something better for you but I haven't."

Q: A lot of talk this season has been about missing details. Why weren't you guys able to fix that during the year?

Carr: "Some things are things that happen over time. They talk about habits and things like that, well, bad habits take a while to break, too. We have to be able to address those things and really, it's simple but it's not easy. You look in the mirror and say, 'I need to fix that,' and it takes every man in there saying, 'This is what I need to fix and what I need to address,' as long as we don't point fingers and blame other people. We just look in the mirror and fix what we have to do and collectively we will be better going forward."

Q: Obviously you don't want to point fingers, but if guys aren't doing the fixes they need to do, how do you let them know without finger pointing?

Carr: "You just have to address it. Just like a coach would with a player. The best coaches just come to you directly and say, 'Hey man, this is what I expect out of you and this is what we need,' and it's not in a bad way. You just try to give good correction, some help that will prepare you going forward. Same thing with a teammate. You know how to approach people, it can't all be the same. You go to certain people and you address it. You have awkward conversations. I've had plenty of those. Awkward conversations that have to be had so that this team and this organization, going forward, we can be better."

Q: What kind of atmosphere are you expecting this weekend?

Carr: "Anytime we've traveled south, that would be L.A., San Diego in the past, our fans travel really well. Gives a good atmosphere. Going in there, different cadences you can use and on the road, you're thinking a silent cadence, but just having experienced other kinds we can go by our voice. It's just little things like that."



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Chargers Head Coach Anthony Lynn Conference Call

Q: What went into the decision before last season to part ways with John Pagano?

Coach Lynn: "New coaching staff. I know of John, but I had the person that I wanted. Whatever I came out landing with, Gus Bradley was my defensive coordinator. Nothing against John at all; great reputation."

Q: What jumps out at you about the different things they're doing on defense over the last five games?

Coach Lynn: "They're playing good, sound, fundamental football. They're playing better right now, for whatever reason. They're just playing better. They had an opportunity to beat one of the better teams in the league Monday night. We expect the Raiders to come in here and give us their best shot. We know they're a talented, physical team, so it should be a good ballgame."

Q: What kind of things do you do to try and improve against the run?

Coach Lynn: "We dug ourselves in a hole early. I believe lately – up until the last couple of weeks – we've been defending the run a lot better. We've had some setbacks in that area and we just have to go back and keep reemphasizing run-reads and doing things with the front seven scheme-wise that is going to put us in better position. We've been light in the box at times. We feel like we had better matchups with smaller personnel. A lot of times teams will see that personnel in the game and run it right at you and you're going to give up some yards in that situation, but you're going to hold them in the passing game, so there's a little bit of give and take there, but overall, I think the second half of the season, the run defense has been a lot better, but obviously not good enough."

Q: What is Melvin Gordon's status for this week right now?

Coach Lynn: "He's day-to-day. He saw the doctors and everything is OK structurally. It's just a matter if he can play with it once we get to the end of the week. We'll work him in slowly and evaluate him at the end."

Q: When you look at the challenge the Raiders present as a pass rushing team, what do you think of that matchup?

Coach Lynn: "That's a tough matchup. Our whole division has been tough in some regards. We see great pass rushers every single week, and that's just becoming a norm in the National Football League. [Khalil] Mack can take over a game if you let him, so we definitely have to have some things in our protection scheme to keep Philip on two feet. This pass rush can be lethal."

Q: Have you talked to the players about preparing for an environment of heavy Raider fans this weekend?

Coach Lynn: "I have no idea what it was like last year in San Diego, but that's been something we've talked about early in the season. California is a great place to visit. If you want to watch your visiting team, a lot of the visitors, if they're going to go somewhere to watch their team on the road, it's California. Yeah, we do get a lot of opposing team fans at the StubHub. I'm sure with the Raiders coming back for the first time in 20 years, I'm sure they will have a lot of their fans there. A lot of their fans are still here. Fans don't play, so we have to prepare and get ready to go out and play against the Oakland Raiders and we don't worry about the fans."